

Has God Eternally Existed?

Here is PROOF that nothing in the universe except God has been existing forever. He alone is without beginning of days or end of years.

by Kenneth C. Herrmann

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CONSIDER for a moment. Could God be anything but eternal? He reveals Himself as the Creator of all there is: the material universe, angelic beings, light, life.

Now if God created all these, then He certainly existed before they did. His time goes back before all of them.

God continues to exist today. He promises to give us eternal life in the world tomorrow. Could He give us something He does not have? Could God give man eternal life if He were not eternal Himself? Would men exist forever in the future and God cease to exist?

Of course not. God will exist forever into the future—an eternal existence.

But has God always existed? He was first in existence. No one could be His Creator. *The One who was before all else must necessarily be Eternal.*

Consider again a moment. Can something come from nothing of itself? Could an empty room suddenly become filled with furniture without a cause? Could an empty "universe" suddenly be filled with stars, planets like our earth, plant and animal life, a planned orderly universe where a moment before there had been nothing? No. Then a Creator God was before them.

Such an event as creation could not take place without a cause. No sound mind could entertain such an idea for long.

The Universe an Illusion?

Ideas have been suggested in an effort to do away with the need of a Creator. *Suppose that the universe doesn't really exist—that it is but an imaginary thing*, just an illusion, something that seems to exist but really doesn't. Observe where this idea comes from. Modern physical science describes the universe in mathematical terms. From the tiniest particles of matter, to the motions of the stars—all can be described by mathematical equations. So perfectly and orderly has our universe been constructed that it can be represented by numerical relationships.

But does this lack of confusion in nature prove that the material world does not exist? Not at all. The mathematical equations of the scientists are based upon the existence of a material universe which the equations describe.

The mathematics is based upon matter which exists just as a house is based

upon its foundation. How can any clear thinking person claim that only the mathematics exists—that its basis does not? A house built upon sand may stand a short time, but a house that does away with its own foundation has already fallen.

The universe, the material world is no illusion! Mathematics may be used to describe it because of the orderly arrangement, but the lack of confusion does not make the world any less real.

An Eternal Universe?

A universe that had always existed would require no Creator. That is obvious. Is it possible that the universe has eternally existed? Scripture and Science cry out a united, NO! *Scripture insists that all was created* and describes the events of such a creation. *Science is anxiously assigning dates* either to events associated with creation or to creation itself.

Our moon, they say, has slowly moved away from the earth at the rate of a few feet per year. The moon is now 239,000 miles away. If time were turned back a thousand million years the moon would be very close to the earth or even joined with it. This suggests the possibility that creation may have taken place less than a thousand million years ago with the moon being created already some distance from the earth.

Other methods of dating give equally enormous figures. Uranium and other radioactive elements disintegrate at a constant rate. By measuring the quantity of disintegrated material against the original quantity of the element which existed, a date for its creation is assigned. The age of the earth according to this method is estimated to be several thousand million years—not eternal!

Notice that radioactivity points to creation, and hence to a Creator. There must have been a time when radioactive matter began to disintegrate.

Meteorites reaching us from outer space contain small portions of radioactive elements. The same method of dating is applied to them. With the aid of these radioactive elements, the meteorites show about the same age as that calculated for the earth.

These measurements prove creation could not have been earlier than several thousand million years ago. It could have been later. This is important to remember. There was a beginning!

On the other hand, the Scripture does not set a definite date for the creation of matter either. *Adam and the world of plants and animals we are acquainted with were created approximately 4000 B.C., but the heavens and earth were brought into existence at an earlier time.* They were created first of all—"In the beginning" as stated in Gen. 1:1.

Earth NOT Created in Chaos

When first created, the world was in harmony and order for "God is not the author of confusion" (I Cor. 14:33). The condition described in Gen. 1:2 where the earth "was (or became) without form (*tohu*), and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep" refers to a later time following a destruction of that original creation. "He (God) created it *not* in vain (*tohu*)." The identical Hebrew word is used here in Isaiah 45:18 as we found in Gen. 1:2. Since God Himself says the earth was not created in vain or chaotic—*tohu*, in Hebrew—then it BECAME that way afterward.

Thus creation of the original heavens and earth may have been millions of years before Adam; *while the creation he looked upon was fashioned only a few days before him.*

The heavens and earth referred to in Gen. 1:3-28 are the atmosphere of this earth and the continents. They were brought from darkness and waste to a state of order in *six literal days* as was explained in a previous article. The fourth commandment "*for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth*", refers to this same "earthly" heavens and earth (continent).

The creation of the heavens containing the sun, moon, stars, and planets (which includes the earth) took place at a time prior to this *second fashioning* of the earth. No word is found in Scripture giving a definite date for that original creation.

It is not a matter of great importance to the Christian way of life just when the material heavens and earth were created. *God's existence goes back eternally; forever into the past.* A billion years would not be even a fraction of God's life!

Should a study of the heavens definitely prove creation to be two or three thousand million years ago, it would only add to the glory of God. It would also bring us to the sober realization

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A GOD OF ORDER

A GOD OF CREATION BUT OF NOTHING

that our three score years and ten are but a moment in the life of our Creator. We may well wonder as David did in the eighth Psalm: "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; What is man, that thou art mindful of him?" A study of the stars can teach us to be humble; it can bring us closer to the Creator of the universe.

David was not prejudiced against the study of the heavens. He looked up and saw that "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament (the expanse of the heavens) sheweth his handywork. Day unto day uttereth speech, (Each day the heavens will teach us), and night unto night sheweth knowledge (Each night the starry skies tell us of our Creator)."

A Limited Universe?

Let's look again into the height of the heavens to see the glory of God. A thousand stars perhaps are visible to our eyes. A small telescope brings ten thousand fainter ones into view. With each increase in power the telescope makes it possible to see farther into space. Distant stars invisible to the unaided eye come into view.

Uncountable billions of them lie within the reach of the 200-inch telescope atop Mt. Palomar in southern California. 200,000 billion, billion (the number 2 followed by 23 zeros) are estimated to be within range of this huge machine. *How many times more lie beyond its range, no one would dare estimate.*

We have been looking at the heavens from man's viewpoint. Suppose we were to see this through the eyes of God. Man struggles to estimate the stars in but a section of the universe. David was inspired to write that God "telleteth the number of the stars; he calleth them all by their names. Great is our Lord, and of great power: his understanding is infinite." (Psalms 147:4, 5).

God's understanding is *infinite*, without limit. Our understanding, our ability, can not be compared with it. The number of stars God has created is a *finite* or countable thing. Numbers go on *forever*; the stars *do not*. Yet we can not count them. All the two thousand million people of the earth together could count but a small fraction of the stars in their entire lifetime. By contrast *He who made these stars knows both them and us by name*. Yes, even the hairs of our head He has numbered (Matt. 10:30).

The estimate given for the number of stars is not the total number in the entire creation but only the nearer ones.

How far out God's creation extends no man knows. *God has set it in the human heart to search out all things*, but the height of the heavens and the depth of the earth will forever remain mysteries to the mind of man. *"It is the glory of God to conceal a thing*: but the honour of kings is to search out a matter. The heaven for height, and the earth for depth, and the heart of kings is unsearchable" (Proverbs 25:2, 3).

Retreating Stars

Astronomers have discovered that all the stars appear to be moving away from *our vicinity* in the universe. Those farthest away appear to be retreating fastest. Careful calculations as to their distance and speed of retreat make it possible to conclude that they all left our approximate position an estimated two thousand million years ago.

Did creation take place at that time? *All the stars of the universe must have been gathered closely together and sent speeding out toward their present positions*. Thus another measurement of the heavens appears to point to a remote but yet definite time in the past—a moment when the universe was born.

The immense distances of stars point out the age of the universe in another manner. These distances are measured in terms of the length of time it requires the light from them to reach the earth. For instance, light from our sun requires about *eight and a third minutes* to make the trip of 93 million miles to the earth. Light from the nearest stars requires *three and four years* to reach us. But light from the farthest stars photographed so far is estimated to have left them over *a thousand million years ago* and has only reached us today. Thus we can conclude that these stars were *then in existence*.

Creation Proves God Eternal

All these figures may be somewhat unfamiliar and confusing. But the conclusions from them are important. Three definite conclusions may be drawn which in no way conflict with Scripture but rather support it and add to God's glory.

One, that the science of the heavens proves the need of a Creator.

Two, that creation could not have been over 4 thousand million years ago.

Three, that creation appears to have been *at least 1 thousand million years ago*. (Figures will vary on this and will change as more accurate means are available for man's search into the heavens.)

Thus it stands proven that the heavens are not eternal. No one method of calculation of its age is safe to de-

pend on. Still taken together they do point out an ancient universe—ancient in years, yet created at a definite time in that remote age. At a *definite date* in the past—perhaps between one and four thousand million years ago our earth, moon, sun and stars were created.

Compare this with the Inspired Record, "In the beginning (or first of all) God created the heavens and the earth." No time is stated for this creation but it was a *definite* event and did take place at a *definite time*. The date is not revealed but rather hidden for man to search out *to the glory of his Creator*.

How does all of this prove the eternity of God? It becomes very simple when we realize that *something or someone has to be eternal*. Since the universe is not eternal, a Being apart from it *must be*. The universe includes everything there is *except the God who reveals Himself as the Creator of it*. He then must have been existing forever in the past. No other conclusion is possible.

Who Created God?

We have shown beyond doubt from Scripture and from God's Creation that this universe of ours is not eternal. *It has not always been*. It had to have a date of creation and a Creator. *God existed before it*.

But who created God? Someone is certain to ask. Well, who did create God? The question is often heard. It does enter our minds. The answer is simple. *Those things which have not always been require a Creator*. But God is eternal. **GOD HAS ALWAYS BEEN**. Do you need a creator for a Being that has always been, has always existed? Of course not!

The difficulty in understanding eternity lies in our human minds. We deal in *finite* things, dollars and cents, years, miles, acres, gallons, pounds. We measure, count, and estimate in units always arriving at a *definite* quantity. Eternity is *without* beginning. It is *without end*. Eternity can not be limited to a definite number of years. Even as numbers can go on forever so does God's life into *both* the past and the future.

Things which are temporal, which have been brought into being, require a creator. But things which have always existed need no creator. The material universe was created and at a definite time in the past. Both Science and Scripture are firm on this point. Therefore the creation is temporal and had a creator. *Since all in existence except this Creator is temporal, HE MUST BE ETERNAL*. He could not have had a beginning of days! *He ALONE is eternal*.